

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Edwards-Winser (Chairman)

Cllr. Esler (Vice Chariman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Ball, Barnes, Barnett, Bayley, Brown, Dr. Canet, Carroll, Cheeseman, Clack, Clayton, Penny Cole, Perry Cole, Coleman, Collins, G. Darrington, P. Darrington, Dickins, Dyball, Eyre, Firth, Fleming, Foster, Fothergill, Griffiths, Grint, Harrison, Hogarth, Hudson, Hunter, Kitchener, London, Maskell, McArthur, McGarvey, McGregor, Morris, Nelson, Osborne-Jackson, Parkin, Pender, Pett, Purves, Raikes, Reay, Roy, Thornton, Waterton and Williamson

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Layland and Piper

85. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 November 2020.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 November 2020 be approved, and signed as a correct record.

86. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting.

No additional declarations of interest, not already registered, were received.

87. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman announced that 'Care for our Community' had been instrumental in helping residents through COVID-19 for the best part of a year, with 1,269 volunteers the help on offer included: collecting food and prescriptions; having someone to talk to; walking the dog; and other small tasks for people who may be shielding. Since March 2020 there had been 1665 requests. The service had run until 31 October 2020 and was then re-instated on 4 November when the new lockdown restrictions came in. The service was 7 days a week and all requests were triaged by the People and Places Team before being passed onto the volunteer leads to help. The Team had also worked closely with the NHS Volunteer First Responders to deliver patient transport services for residents who needed to get to Vaccination and hospital appointments. This was especially important right now as a further 1.7m people across the country were urged this week to shield until they had their jab.

He also advised that in the past year the Business Rates team, assisted by a number of others, had distributed millions in grants to local businesses. The total

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amount as at last week had been in excess of £32.6m and consisted of more than 4,800 payments, which was much needed support in these very challenging times.

Finally he advised that as part of his preparation for the meeting, he had looked back at past meetings and noted that the February meeting in 2020 had been the last meeting in the Council Chamber. Two weeks later had been the first lockdown and a general cancellation of all meetings at the office - to be replaced by Zoom - a situation that he personally, and which was mirrored by other members and officers that he had spoken to, could not end soon enough.

88. To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No questions had been received.

89. To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No petitions had been received.

90. Matters considered by the Cabinet:

a) Calculation of Council Tax Base and other tax setting issues

Councillor Fleming moved and Cllr Dickins seconded the recommendations from Cabinet, which sought approval of the calculation of the District's tax base for council tax setting purposes.

Resolved: That

- a) the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2021/22 be approved;
- b) pursuant to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for the year 2021/22 shall be 50,876.85;
- c) pursuant to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as the council tax base for 2021/22 for the calculation of local precepts shall be:

Parish	Tax Base
Ash-cum-Ridley	2,426.35
Badgers Mount	328.16
Brasted	775.49

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Chevening	1,445.79
Chiddingstone	602.21
Cowden	442.50
Crockenhill	654.75
Dunton Green	1,329.09
Edenbridge	3,730.15
Eynsford	944.94
Farningham	661.54
Fawkham	289.59
Halstead	767.03
Hartley	2,532.03
Hever	618.74
Hextable	1,677.33
Horton Kirby & South Darent	1,276.35
Kemsing	1,825.81
Knockholt	633.11
Leigh	945.82
Otford	1,723.77
Penshurst	826.26
Riverhead	1,246.83
Seal	1,298.29
Sevenoaks Town	9,648.91
Sevenoaks Weald	611.46
Shoreham	686.73
Sundridge	928.01
Swanley	5,640.98
Westerham	2,037.57
West Kingsdown	2,321.26

- d) any expenses incurred by the Council in performing in part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by a parish or community council or the chairman of a parish meeting shall not be treated as special expenses for the purposes of section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

a) Council Tax Setting 2021/22

Councillor Fleming moved and Cllr Dickins seconded the recommendations from Cabinet and the recommendation contained within Appendix K to the report to Council, subject noting that recommendation (a) to Appendix K which would form (d) onwards of the final motion, should read 17 November 2020 not 5 November 2020.

The Leader stated that in November Full Council had given cross party support for a budget that balanced savings, protected frontline services and investment returns, and had made assumptions regarding council tax levels which had not been possible to set at that time and had needed to wait this meeting.

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By putting savings in place a full three months before this evening, overall pressure on the budget had been reduced by £90,000. Again, Sevenoaks District Council had innovated and shown the way, putting itself ahead of the game and reducing the impact on all the district's council tax payers.

The last year had seen a huge impact on many people's lives across the district. There had been increased numbers of households coming to the council for help. Whether, housing, employment, training, council tax and benefits, or local businesses, all had been supported throughout the pandemic with funding, support and advice.

He further stated that the council had not been immune to the impacts of Covid-19 and over the last year the pandemic had cost the council over £4.6m in increased costs and lost income. The Government had provided some funding, however the council had been left needing to find in excess of £300,000. He advised that work had been carried out on making savings or delivering additional income in the budget of £1m and this had been done without impacting the frontline services provided to residents and businesses, as more than ever, the council needed to be ready to help and support individuals and communities coming out of the pandemic and to start looking at the district's recovery.

The Prime Minister's announcement the previous evening had given the country much needed hope with a route map out of both full lockdown and other restrictions as the year progresses. However as various national protections inevitably fell away like the furlough scheme or housing safety net, much of the pressure would be shouldered by the district council and the services provided, and the council would stand ready to support the district's communities and individuals.

In light of the above he advised that what was being proposed was a very limited Council Tax increase that equated, for the average household, to a little under £5 a year or 10p a week, which would allow the work in support of residents, businesses and the communities served to continue through uncertain times. He commended the recommendations to Council.

In accordance with Rule 31, Part II of the Council's Constitution, a recorded vote was taken of all Councillors who had been present throughout the debate of the item.

For: 50

Cllrs Abraham, Ball, Barnes, Barnett, Bayley, Brown, Dr. Canet, Carroll, Cheeseman, Clack, Clayton, Penny Cole, Perry Cole, Coleman, Collins, G. Darrington, P. Darrington, Dickins, Dyball, Edwards-Winser, Esler, Eyre, Firth, Fleming, Fothergill, Griffiths, Grint, Harrison, Hogarth, Hudson, Hunter, Kitchener, London, Maskell, McArthur, McGarvey, McGregor, Morris, Nelson, Osborne-Jackson, Parkin, Pender, Pett, Purves, Raikes, Reay, Roy, Thornton, Waterton and Williamson.

Against: 0

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Abstain: 0

It was therefore

Resolved: That

- a) the updated Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax for 2021/22, as set out in [Appendix D](#) to the report, be approved;
- b) the updated 10-year budget 2021/22 to 2030/31, as set out in [Appendix B\(i\)](#) to the report, be approved;
- c) the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/21, be rolled forward to 2021/22, with effect from 1 April 2021, as set out in [Appendix G](#) to the report.
- d) it be noted that at the Council meeting on 17 November 2020, the Capital Programme and funding method for 2021/24 and Capital Strategy 2021/22 were approved;
- e) it be noted that at the Cabinet meeting on 14 January 2021, and approved in Minute 90 (a) above, the Council calculated as its council tax base for the year 2021/22:
 - (i) for the whole Council area as 50,876.85 being Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, (the “Act”); and
 - (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates as to [Appendix J](#) to the report.
- f) that the council tax requirement for the Council’s own purpose for 2021/22 (excluding Town and Parish precepts) be calculated as £224.91;
- g) that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - (i) £54,824,070 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Town and Parish Councils.
 - (ii) £38,602,263 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

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- (iii) £16,221,807 being the amount by which the aggregate at (g)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (g)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
- (iv) £318.84 being the amount at (g)(iii) above (Item R), all divided by (e)(i) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including Town and Parish precepts).
- (v) £4,779,095 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Town and Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per [Appendix J](#) to the report).
- (vi) £224.91 being the amount at (g)(iv) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (g)(v) above by the amount at (e)(i) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Town or Parish precept relates.

h) it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the Kent County Council, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and the Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>Precepting Authority</u>			
	Sevenoaks District Council £	Kent County Council £	Kent Police & C.C. £	Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority £
A	149.94	945.84	145.43	53.88

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B	174.93	1,103.48	169.67	62.86
C	199.92	1,261.12	193.91	71.84
D	224.91	1,418.76	218.15	80.82
E	274.89	1,734.04	266.63	98.78
F	324.87	2,049.32	315.11	116.74
G	374.85	2,364.60	363.58	134.70
H	449.82	2,837.52	436.30	161.64

- i) in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in [Appendix L](#) and [L\(i\)](#) to the report, as the amounts of council tax for the year 2021/22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings; and
- j) the Council's basic amount of council tax for 2021/22, shown in (g)(vi) above, is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

k) Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22

Councillor Fleming moved and Cllr Dickins seconded the recommendation from Cabinet, which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, be approved.

l) Property Investment Strategy Update Report

Councillor Fleming moved and Cllr Dickins seconded the recommendations from Cabinet, which sought approval to some changes to criteria. Both Members thanked the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee for their work on this.

Resolved: That

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) the following changes be approved

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- i) all asset categories be included in the strategy subject to appropriate due diligence and ensuring no asset class exceeds 20% in total value of the approved funding; and
- ii) the location of the potential investments be expanded to all of England.

m) Private Sector Housing Enforcement Report

Councillor Fleming moved and Cllr Maskell seconded the recommendation from Cabinet, which sought adoption of a Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

Resolved: That the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy as set out in Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

91. Matters considered by other standing committees:

a) Monitoring Officer's Annual Report

Councillor Ball moved and Councillor Raikes seconded the recommendation from the Standards Committee.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

92. To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council:

a) Pay Policy Statement

Councillor Fleming moved and Councillor Dickins seconded the report which sought approval of the Pay Policy Statement in order to fulfil the Council's statutory requirements under the Localism Act.

Resolved: That the Pay Policy Statement be adopted and published on the Council's website.

93. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No questions had been received.

94. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No motions had been received.

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95. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting.

The Leader of the Council reported on the work that he and the Cabinet had undertaken in the period 2 November 2020 to 5 February 2021. Councillor Purves requested that the Leader circulate any notes he may have on his meetings with Kent Highways.

96. Quarterly report on Special Urgency decisions.

Members considered and noted, the quarterly report on special urgency decisions.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.25 PM

CHAIRMAN